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John Allen Chalk: Personal Correspondence

John Allen Chalk

1-29-1971

From/To: W.A. Brumit, Sr. (Chalk's reply filed first)

W.A. Brumit, Sr.

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January 29, 1971

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Mr. W. A. Brumit, Sr.
Mr. R. H. Peace
Park Street Church of Christ
P. O. Box 702
Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101

Dear Brethren:

Thank you so much for your very gracious letter of invitation to consider with you the future direction of the Park Street Congregation. I have watched this congregation with a special personal interest because of your association with and support of the Wesley Jones family. Needless to say, my respect for Wes is unbounded and my deep appreciation to you for being a part of his ministry is also great.

I have never received a more sensitive letter regarding a matter of this nature. Your letter was a real inspiration to me. It reflected the kind of deep spiritual concern that I believe all elders must have. God bless you for the sensitive way you described your present situation.

Unfortunately, I see no way I can genuinely consider such a move. My own personal commitments, as well as those of my family, are such that I would not be able to give your invitation the kind of consideration it deserves.

There is no way to tell you how much I appreciate your thinking of me. I would like nothing better than to work with a congregation like yours and especially in the setting that I believe Bowling Green offers. I have many personal friends at Western Kentucky University, as well as within your own membership, but circumstances here require that I not consider any move at this time.

If I can be of any assistance in your continued search, please feel free to call on me.

Fraternally yours,

John Allen Chalk

JAC:lc

PARK STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

ELDERS: WILLIAM A. BRUMIT RAYMOND H. PEACE

CORNER PARK AND THIRTEENTH STREETS

P. O. BOX 702

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY 42101

TELEPHONE 843-9442

John Allan Chalk
FIFTH AND HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST
Abilene, Texas 79604

Dear brother Chalk:

Following the conversation on the phone with Charles Van Eaton, and considering the challenge we face at the moment of finding God's man for our work here, we are writing directly about this subject. We would like you to study our work and give us a basis upon which to study you and your qualifications for the work here.

By noting CHURCHES OF TODAY, Vol. 2, page 125, you may survey the history of the congregation and have a bird's eye view of its work program since 1930. We shall rather dwell in this letter on some of the concepts and philosophies of this work which will help you to pray about this invitation.

Bowling Green is situated in a rural area. Our people are for the most part rural and semi-rural people. The city is now experiencing rapid growth and more industrialization than it has known in years. We do not claim many specializations or sophistications in our work. The strength of our work has been from the Lord and not from human expertise.

We would not like to imply that we are not learning or that we are unwilling to learn. Several areas of very solid growth and increased spirituality among the membership will indicate that God in His grace is blessing us and that we are learning.

Special challenges we face at this point in our growth are: (1) The proximity of the campus of Western Kentucky University with a student body of 12,000, and a campus ministry sponsored by this congregation which is now three and one half years old.

Ed Van Hooser works under our direction in a full-time campus evangelism program. This work is growing. Young people are being converted. Many out of rural churches where they have not been excited by a viable faith are being found, and are finding the Lord. Some of our most promising future is in this work.

(2) The urbanization of our area offers special challenge.

Christians can no longer feel "secure" in the isolation of their community from the "world." They are now daily confronted with secularism and affluence and immorality. Believing as we do that the Good News contains the key to happiness in this life as well as the hope of the next, we want to speak that gospel to people where they live now.

(3) Effectiveness is a challenge for us. We believe that God has allowed us great flexibility in the way we tell the old story. While the story itself is eternally unchanging, the most productive way of relating it, house to house and from the platform, is an often elusive goal. We are prayerfully seeking those methods.

We do not believe there is any methodology that can or should overshadow Christ-centered preaching. Ignorance of God's word within and without the Church alarms us. The preacher we call here must be willing and able to proclaim the Bible message in word and life, and we would not like our comments on method to imply that the message is second to method.

(4) Since 1962 we have fully supported at least one family in a foreign field. The Joneses, who have been in Canada since 1962, will now be going to Indonesia for a life-time. We are dedicated to keeping the congregation prayerful and responsible in their support of this family, and will continue to see the ways in which we can expand the mission activity of the Church -- on foreign fields, on the campus, and in the homes, hospitals and streets of our own city.

In 1965 the Lord opened the way for us to extend the borders of His kingdom into an area of our city known as Delafield--an area in which the Lord's church had never been successfully planted before. This came about when the old Delafield school burned and the property upon which it had stood was sold at public auction.

With the Lord's help Park Street was able to acquire the property and in 1966 a new church building was erected on the site. By the providence of God and under the very competent and able ministry of Bro. Ed Van Hooser, the work grew tremendously from a nucleus of twenty-nine (29) Park Street members in 1966, to a present membership of two hundred twenty-five (225) -- an entirely self-supporting congregation. Naturally, there exists a very close relationship between the Park Street and Delafield congregations.

We might add that when Bro. Van Hooser came to Park Street to take over the campus ministry, the work in Delafield was placed in the hands of Bro. Bill Swetmon, a young man who had gone to Delafield with the original group that started the congregation. Bro. Swetmon is a hard-working, capable young minister, dedicated to the Lord's work, and the congregation there has continued to grow under his leadership.

Mr. John Allan Chalk
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For at least ten years our work has grown in spite of considerable criticism from the "brotherhood" of this area. This pressure has not all come from one group by any means. But it should be understood by any one considering this work that (1) this criticism of our work does exist; and (2) that we do not believe our mission is to answer it all, or to be constantly involved in response to all who speak out.

We would like to be at peace with all men, and especially with our brethren. Our mission is not to deliberately irritate or harass. Nor is it to run for cover in shyness. We would love all men and have all men to know that we love them. We believe the answer to all such "biting and devouring" has to be found in the Lordship of Christ, the prince of peace, and not in continual bickering and back-biting.

We cannot say that every member of the congregation would accept or verbalize this approach to our relationships with other congregations. But they do follow our leadership, and as they do, as we grow, as we learn more about outreach, we are less and less slowed down by the sound of destructive criticism.

Our present plant, with the exception of recent class-room additions, is the original building. It is gradually growing inadequate. Some serious thought is being given to the future needs of the Church, which is almost a downtown congregation, set amid older homes (and therefore near the campus). A new student center, between the building and the campus is now nearing completion. The best course of action for overall property needs of the future will continue to get our prayerful concern and research.

We believe the congregation is blessed with good talent. In age groups there is a good spectrum. We have an interested and involved group of deacons. Four professors from Western are now a part of the Church, and we have one full-time secretary.

Bro. Chalk, we know that you know this area of "Church geography" and there are few more specifics that we need to give you unless both of us are ready to pursue this possibility of your relationship to us further. Please give it your best thoughts, and talk to the Lord and your family about it, and let us have your reaction.

In His Cause,

W.A. Brumit Sr.

W.A. Brumit, Sr.

R.H. Peace

R.H. Peace
Elders